

MOMENTUM

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for Eastman Dental Center
Alumni & Friends

EDC

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Commencement



Paul Goldhaber

On June 14, 34 postdoctoral students received certificates signifying their completion of advanced training in general dentistry or a specialty program at the Eastman Dental Center.

William D. McHugh, the Center's director, introduced this year's commencement speaker saying, "It is our custom to invite a person of distinction to present our commencement address and we are fortunate that Dr. Paul Goldhaber accepted our invitation to be with us today. Paul is a man of great distinction. He received his dental degree from New York University and his specialty certificate in periodontology from Columbia University. After two years of research at Sloan-Kettering Institute of Cancer Research, he moved to Boston to the Harvard School of Dental Medicine. His talents were soon recognized and he was promoted rapidly through the ranks to professor of periodontology and, since 1968 has been dean.

"Paul is recognized and admired for his work on factors

involved in bone resorption and has been an active researcher all his professional life. He is the current president of the International Association for Dental Research."

Dr. Goldhaber's address follows.

"To Comfort, Always"

I am honored to be a part of these commencement exercises. I accepted the invitation to speak for several reasons: first, I admire Dr. William McHugh as an outstanding leader of one of the country's foremost dental research and teaching institutions; second, I have great respect for the talented faculty of the Eastman Dental Center; third, some years ago I served on a small committee appointed by Eastman's trustees for the purpose of recommending whether Eastman should refurbish its original building or move to the other side of town and erect a new building on the campus of the University of Rochester. We unanimously recommended the latter course of action and, indeed, that's what Eastman decided to do. Since I feel somewhat responsible for the construction of this impressive facility, I was anxious to see for myself the end result of that decision-making process. Finally, the invitation gave me the opportunity — no, rather it forced me — to sit down and put on paper some thoughts that have been flitting about in my mind concerning the dental profession. I suspect that Dr. McHugh expected me to talk about dentistry in the year 2000; the faculty probably assumed I would talk about dental research; and the students and their families probably didn't care what the topic was — as long as I didn't go beyond 3-5 minutes. Unfortunately, I'll have to disappoint all of you.

I shall not talk about these turbulent times for the dental profession when practitioners, students, and dental institutions try to cope with the rapidly changing scene and uncertainty about the future. I promise not to refer to the practitioners' "lack of busyness," nor the development of alternative systems of delivering dental care, preferred provider organizations or dental capitation plans. I shall not discuss increasing tuition and living expenses for dental students nor government cutbacks in scholarships and loans. Nor shall I comment on the constant barrage of doom and gloom from all sides about the future of the dental profession.

What I would like to discuss is what I consider to be the principal ingredient — the core — of our profession, namely, the doctor-patient relationship. This relationship is best summarized by an old French proverb which I frequently quote:

"To cure, sometimes
To help, often

Continued on page 2



Max Farash, president of EDC's Board, extended the greetings and best wishes of the trustees to the graduates. Included in his brief remarks was this pithy reflection: "Few have been privileged to see beyond the horizon into the future. George Eastman was such a person. His vision of the world of tomorrow was light-years ahead of his time and though he has not been with us for over half a century, his vision is advanced even for today. This institution and building are a tribute to him and to you who have completed your professional training here. From your group we expect outstanding leadership in your profession. Look beyond the horizon and achieve new levels of excellence which has been the tradition at the Eastman Dental Center."

Continued from page 1

To comfort, always."

About 20 years ago, when I was on the admissions committee at our school, I remember how upset I used to become during interviews with some dental applicants when in response to my query about why they wished to become dentists, the answer was "because I like to work with my hands." Indeed, on one occasion I created a bit of a fuss in our committee when I wrote up the results of such an interview and suggested that such applicants ought to consider becoming *masseurs* rather than dentists, since in my opinion liking to work with one's hands was not a sufficient reason for going into dentistry. Similarly, I was turned off by those who stated that they were attracted to dentistry primarily because as dentists they could be their own boss, set convenient working hours and vacation periods, and make lots of money. Presumably, those individuals had in mind the inappropriate dictionary definition of a "professional" — that is, "one who engages for money to compete in sports: as opposed to amateur." Let's get our priorities straight. Unless one's primary reason for becoming a dentist is to help peo-

ple, to prevent or relieve them of pain and suffering (both physical and emotional), one has entered the wrong field. Having concern for people is a personal characteristic that one is born with or acquires during the early formative years, primarily from one's immediate family. All that dental schools can do in this regard is to reinforce, or perhaps undermine this enviable trait through the actions and attitudes of their faculty members.

Although our profession strives continuously to improve and broaden the scope of its technical achievements and therapeutic modalities, there are, paradoxically, many occasions when to do less to the patient is to accomplish more. Too often, we label the most complicated and costly treatment plan as "ideal" when, in fact, the patient is not able to manage the protracted treatment time and discomfort, the financial strain, or the long-term maintenance care. "Ideal" is what is best for that patient — not what we as dentists are capable of doing, given a set of X-rays, study models, and a detailed description of decayed, missing and filled teeth, plus all pertinent pocket and mobility data. More disturbing are the too frequent examples of **overtreatment**, particularly where extensive periodontal surgery, and full-mouth splinting is recommended for very minor and localized periodontal defects. Too often, the patient is frightened into starting therapy immediately without seeking a second opinion because it is implied that without such treatment, "All your teeth will fall out within a year or so."

Just because we know how to treat a particular condition does not necessarily mean that correction of the problem is in the best interest of the patient. This point is well made by the following parable:

There once was a wealthy man who had two daughters. One was absolutely ugly and the other was constantly hysterical and screamed continuously. Fortunately, each of them married perfect husbands. The ugly daughter married a man who was blind, while the constantly screaming daughter married a man who was deaf. Each couple lived happily despite their various defects.

Several years later a famous physician came to town and offered to cure the husbands of their serious physical defects by some new surgical methods. The families agreed. Hearing was restored to the deaf husband and sight was restored to the blind husband. Unfortunately, when the previously blind husband opened his eyes and saw his extremely ugly wife his life became miserable. Similarly, when the previously deaf husband was first exposed to the hysterical screaming of his wife, he was almost driven mad.

Although the operations were "successful," did these patients really benefit from these medical miracles?

What we need more of in prescribing for patients is "informed consent" wherein the patient is offered several treatment plans and a clear cost-benefit analysis of each approach. Unfortunately, this is easier said than done since we have shamefully few long-term clinical studies as to the efficacy of many procedures currently advocated by the profession.

As dentists, we must pay heed to the thesis that everything the clinician does is a blend of technology and samaritanism. By samaritanism is meant that collection of acts that lends reassurance or peace of mind to someone troubled by disease or illness. The outstanding doctor must be proficient at both the technologic and samaritan functions of the healing professions.

One thing we must all learn to do better is to listen to our

Alumni News

All EDC Alumni:

Please note that on June 10, 1985 the senior staff executive committee approved a new policy on provision of duplicate original certificates.

The Eastman Dental Center will provide a limited number of duplicate copies of original Specialty and General Dentistry Certificates to alumni. These certificates will be identical to the originals as far as possible with hand lettering and the Center's seal. Where possible, the signatures of the appropriate Chairman and Director will be obtained; otherwise the certificates will be signed by their successors in office. There will be a charge of \$100 for each duplicate certificate.

Jerome Meadow, Intern '39, and his wife were traveling through the area and paid a brief visit to the Center recently. Dr. Meadow, who spoke with affection of Dr. Harvey Burkhardt, EDC's first director from 1915 to 1946, practices in Richfield Springs, New York.

Thomas A. Chamberlain, Intern '57, has "a new office after 23 years" in Garden Grove, California.

Alicia Veliz L., Intern '57, who writes from Lima, Peru, that she always "enjoys reading *MOMENTUM*," was especially interested in the issue on the Basil G. Bibby Symposium and adds, "Dr. Bibby, an outstanding researcher and educator, will always be remembered by all of his disciples all over the world." She was inducted as a Fellow of the International College of Dentists in November 1984. She is in charge of a research committee of the Dental Faculty of San Marcos University. One of her recent projects was *A comparison of dental caries prevalence in Quechua and Aymara natives of Puno, Peru*.

Ted Di Santis, Pedo '57, writes that he "was appointed chairman of the Department of Dentistry at the Euclid Clinic Foundation in Cleveland, Ohio. The department also includes **Hud Fowler**, Ortho '69, and **Larry Fox**, Pedo '68."

William H. Myones, GenDen '74, has been appointed clinical assistant professor in the Department of Surgery at the University of Miami School of Medicine. Dr. Myones, a periodontist in Pembroke Pines, Florida, has recently opened an additional office in Coral Springs. On June 1, he married Linda Fellner, of Miami Beach.

Rafael Ganddini, GenDen '79, Prostho '81, and his wife Lisa visited Rochester from Guatemala early this summer. Rafael looks well, and his practice is prospering. On July 3, while in Rochester, Lisa gave birth to Alexandra Lyn. The family is back in Guatemala doing beautifully.



Harold Kolodney, GenDen '81, in a letter to Stan Handelman, says, "I've accepted a position in the prosthodontic section at the University of Mississippi in Jackson. I'll be starting there this fall and am looking forward to the move and working there. It seems like a friendly and comfortable town and appears to have good resources at the school. **Tom Wiggins** (GenDen '81) has a very successful growing practice 2 hours north in Cleveland, Mississippi, and has good feelings toward the school."

M. John Novak, Perio '82, was named a Diplomate of the American Board of Periodontology.

Youssef Guindy, GenDen '83, who is working on his Ph.D. in biochemistry specializing in molecular genetics at the University of Göteborg, Sweden, has spent the past three summers at EDC with John Featherstone, chairman of the Department of Oral Biology. After Youssef received his bachelor's degree in biochemistry from Loma Linda University in California, he went to Sweden to work with Ulf Lagerkvist (whose father, Pär, won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1951). Youssef still works with Dr. Lagerkvist, but "a desire to meet people," he says, took him out of full-time research and into dentistry. He maintains a ten-hour a week private practice while working on his Ph.D. His goal, when he finishes his Ph.D. in approximately 18 months, is to combine dental research with a general practice.



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